AN ATTEMPT TO DEFINE NOTHINGNESS AND A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ULTIMATE WHY QUESTION: WHY IS THERE SOMETHING RATHER THAN NOTHING?

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ABSTRACT

AN ATTEMPT TO DEFINE NOTHINGNESS AND A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ULTIMATE WHY QUESTION: WHY IS THERE SOMETHING RATHER THAN NOTHING?

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The main objective of this study is to make a comprehensive analysis of the question "Why is there something rather than nothing?", which is one of the major questions of metaphysics, and to find a plausible answer at the end, if it is possible. To begin this analysis, a clarification of what we understand by this question is needed first. For the clarification, a definition of 'nothingness' will be sought. Afterwards, the motivation for us to ask this question, the significance of it, and the content of it will be investigated. This investigation will help us concentrate on and discuss within the framework of causation and necessity our understanding of "contingent beings" and "nothingness". Two main approaches sought to answer this question till now are by theists and physicists. Those approaches will be discussed and compared. And at the end of the comparative analysis of these two approaches, a metaphysical approach which will be a layer of them will be sought.

Keywords: Nothingness, Contingency, Ultimate Explanation, Conceptual Idealization, Ontological Intuition.

ÖZ

HİÇLİĞİ TANIMLAMA DENEMESİ VE EN TEMEL NEDEN SORUSUNUN-- NEDEN HİÇLİK DEĞİL DE BİR ŞEYLER VAR-- FELSEFİ BİR ANALİZİ

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Bu çalışmanın temel amacı metafiziğin başlıca sorularından birisi olan "Neden hiçlik değil de bir şey var?" sorusunun detaylı bir analizini yapmak ve mümkünse sonunda bir cevap bulmaktır. Bu analize başlamak için, ilk olarak, bu sorudan ne anlaşıldığının bir açıklığa kavuşturulması gerekmektedir. Bunu başarmak için, 'hiçlik' kavramının bir tanımı aranacaktır. Sonrasında, bu soruyu sormamızdaki etken, onun önemi ve içeriği sorgulanacaktır. Bu sorgulama bize nedensellik ve zorunluluk çerçevesinde "olanaklı varlıklar" ve "hiçlik" anlayışlarımız üzerine konsantre olmamıza ve tartışmamıza yardımcı olacaktır. Teistler ve fizikçiler tarafından olmak üzere, şu ana kadar iki temel yaklaşım bu soruya cevap bulma arayışına girmişlerdir. Bu yaklaşımlar tartışılacak ve karşılaştırılacaktır. Bu karşılaştırmalı analizin sonucunda, onlara temel olacak metafiziksel bir yaklaşım aranacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hiçlik, Olanaklılık, Nihai Açıklama, Kavramsal İdealizasyon, Metafiziksel Görü.

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CHAPTER 1

DISCOVERING NOTHINGNESS

Why is there something rather than nothing? This question has bugged and dazzled philosophers for centuries and it still does so without losing any of its effects. It seems to me that no plausible answer has been given so far, and what is even worse, there may not be found any plausible answer for this question. This situation has led some philosophers to think that this question is not sound. This idea has been favored by a certain group of scholars and has become a tradition now. This tradition to declare that question as illegitimate has started with the logical positivists' account of the question. The reason behind their thinking so is, I believe, their desperateness to find an answer. However, declaring a question as illegitimate and unanswerable are quite different. And their argument to support their quick conclusion is about the content of the question. For them, 'nothing' is an unsound word ontologically speaking, since it is not even possible to make a definition of it, let alone talking about its possibility.

As a result, their claim is that "nothing" is impossible; therefore, there must be something. Even if there might be a possibility for their conclusion to be true—which is that since nothingness is not a possibility, its negation, "somethingness," must be the case—the claim "There must be a certain something" does not come from any necessity. We all agree on the fact that this particular something is contingent. This means that something, whose existence we rarely question, might have been in another way, or might not have been at all. Therefore, this somethingness requires an explanation. Whether this explanation needs to be discussed in terms of nothingness, or why it has been necessarily discussed in terms of nothingness, will be the subject matter of the first chapter.

1.1. The Formulation and the Content of the "Ultimate Why Question"

In his new book titled *The Ultimate Why Question,* Wippel (2011:1) introduces our subject of inquiry as "the ultimate why question." For him this question has always

been regarded as one of the major questions of philosophy. Unless it finds some convincing answer, this question will be gaining more and more importance. It is true that this question may be one of the most puzzling questions, but before anything else, we must not forget that this question is proposed by ourselves. There must be a trigger behind this question. Because of this reason, I believe that its being a question is the most useful point to start with.

To be able to answer a question, we must first understand it correctly. What makes the "ultimate question" so important is the fact that it brings "the problem of nothingness" to the fore. It looks as if the "why" and the "nothing" parts of the question have equal significance. Before I start discussing the "why" part, a clarification of the part 'nothing' is needed.

1.2. Questioning "Nothing"

In order for us to understand something, we ask a question about it but is "nothingness" questionable? What can be questioned? A simple answer would be that anything can be questioned. But is nothing one of those "things" which are questionable? If the answer is yes, then nothing is something—i.e. something questionable—which means that it is not "nothing." If the answer is no, then what is the "nothing" that we are now talking about? This is the Old Platonic Riddle, which claims that if we are talking about "nothing," then that nothing must be somehow something.

Does being talked about make "that thing" something? At the point that we can ask questions about it, it becomes something. Then, nothingness cannot even be a subject of inquiry. It is because of the very nature of our questioning faculty. We cannot question about nothingness since every question entails potential options to choose among them. To what range can we question it? We have "wh-questions" (why, what, which, where, when, who) and yes-no questions. Let us try applying them. The first question might be: Why is there not nothingness? The answer would bring another question like "Which nothingness?" or "Is there not nothingness?". As it we see, every question is either presupposing an answer or turning the question into another question, which may even lead us to an infinite regress. This reminds us

Heidegger's way of questioning to destroy traditional ways of questioning in general. His claim is that unlike the traditional ways of questioning, his way of questioning does not include any presupposition about the question. He invents a new terminology to get rid of any presupposition, and to limit a question by making it just a guiding activity. Nevertheless, what I mean by questioning is related to the very nature of questioning itself. That is not a method that gives us options to choose. Presupposition and being a guiding activity have the same meaning in this sense. It is about the nature of questioning; not about a single way of questioning.[1]

To come back to our point, this is not just about questioning. Even when we talk about nothing, we have a presupposition. Thus, what we call "nothing" must always be a pre-assumed "something." The cornerstone of the problem stands here. We are looking for a relation between "nothing" and us, human beings. If we can somehow find a relation of us with nothing, then won't "nothing" become a *relatum* or a property which is to be related? If we ask a why question, then it will be seeking for an explanation. Similarly with the other questions: "when" makes it related with temporality, "where" makes it related with location and so forth. So, how can we ask a proper question about "nothing" then? It seems that asking a proper question about nothingness is impossible in this sense. However, we all seem to agree on the meaning of "nothingness" while we are talking about it. Can we define that meaning?

1.3. Defining 'Nothing'

What is the meaning of 'nothingness'? This question was asked by Erdinç Sayan. He has a series of arguments, discussing the possibility of defining 'nothingness.' His final proposal is that "nothingness is the state which lacks any kind of concrete or abstract, necessary or possible object, phenomenon, quantity, quality and relation". (2010, p.63) He criticizes his own arguments on the definition by saying that a definition may make "nothing" a thing. Then, he asserts that to call a state/situation a thing is not easy, since the term "case" [*durum*] is a very special one. Here, we face

[1] As a matter of fact, Heidegger also asks the ultimate why question and has long discussions on it; nevertheless, his rejection of seeking a layer and his rejection of modern logic in this seeking change the meaning of the question. Therefore, his writings will not be included in my thesis.

with another problem about the word "case," but this problem may take us one step further in our inquiry on nothingness. That is the suffix "-ness." This suffix is used to form abstract nouns which express a state, a condition or a case. That is to say, it is a tautology to make a statement that says …-ness is a case. This is similar to saying that I am here since 'here' already means where I am. One can argue this way, but so what? Do not we sometimes use tautological statements to explain things?

The method used in Sayan's definition is like dressing up a ghost to make it visible. Assume that there is a ghost in this room. How can we find it out? We should wait for its motion so that we can hear a sound, or wave our arms to be able to touch it. If what we are looking for is its shape, then we should try to dress it up. Similarly, the term 'nothingness' is like a dressed ghost in our inquiry. In this analogy, "nothing" is the ghost and "nothingness" is the dressed ghost. Why do we dress it up? When we dress "nothing" with "ness", "nothing" becomes a case of being nothing but what do we have now about "nothing"?

It looks as if that dressing up will be used to refer to this part of the statement: "…lacks any kind of concrete or abstract, necessary or possible object, phenomenon, quantity, quality and relation". What we can understand from this part is "lacking any kind of property". This implies property-less-ness but is not "lacking any kind of property" (Sayan, p.64 and Perszyk, p. 51) itself a property? This may seem to be reducing the whole statement into two suffixes: "ness" and "less". Therefore, his definition can be summarized as "being"lessness. This being includes all of the properties listed above. What about the part "to be or being" in the statement? Sayan uses an equation sign rather than the verb "to be". His statement is "nothingness $=_{df}$[2] the case …" but we know that equation sign is not different from saying "is equal to". Therefore, there is no solution in this definition for the opposition that "is" makes "nothing" contradictory.

In conclusion, after the entire struggle to find a proper definition for nothing, I come across with a concept of Heidegger. He talks about average understanding. We all have an average understanding of the meaning of 'nothing' but somehow we

[2] 'df' is abbreviation of "by definition".

cannot define it. It seems that we have failed to formulate a proper question about nothing and to find a proper definition for "it". Then, what is nothing? Whatever we do to reach it, it seems in vain. What lies behind it? Maybe it is because we act as receivers and expect a communication with nothing but how can we get any message from it? There is no such thing as "nothing" to send or to receive a message. Nevertheless, somehow we have a relation with "it." This "being related-ness" must be suspended for the time being, since we are looking for an answer through our existence. It is us for whom "nothing" is a concern. What I will discuss now is not the present actuality of "absolute nothing," since if there were any absolute nothing, it could not be a concern for us because of its nature according to the above-mentioned discussions. It is quite interesting that both theists and physicists discuss "nothingness" as absolute, not relative. Any kind of relative nothingness, such as nothingness in terms of human conditions or with epistemological concerns or emotional concepts of continental philosophers like Heidegger and Sartre will not take place in this discussion. The "nothingness" to be the discussed here is an ontological possibility. How we can think about ontological possibilities is to be studied.

At least for now, in the following pages, I will discuss "absolute nothing" as an idealization. Here it would be wrong to understand "idealization" simply as it is in philosophy of science or in psychology. To prevent any possible confusion about "absolute nothing," let me say that the "nothing" I have talked about so far is absolute nothing, but this absoluteness is not a property. I am not talking about two different entities, "nothing" and "absolute nothing." Nothing that we averagely know about must be absolute by its nature. If so, there is hope. We know at least one thing about "nothing": that it is absolute. Whether "being absolute" and "being idealized" will make "nothing" more concrete for us will be discussed. Whether being absolute or idealized is a property or not in this context will also be discussed. But now, I believe that to begin with the origin of the "nothing" that we averagely know or talk about will be more useful.

1.4. The Origin of Nothing[3]

One might have doubts about whether the "nothing" which is averagely known by us that I have mentioned above, may not be the same "nothing" for each of us. How can we be sure about the sameness of "nothing" that each of us understands? I wish we could have an investigation as sociologists do (asking people in the society). Assume that we are asking three people on a street, and one of them is a logical positivist, the other is a theist, and the other is physicist, "What do you understand by 'nothing'?". What would be the answers? More importantly, could we make a judgment based on those answers? I am almost sure that although they could not define it, or even if they could, they would differ in their definitions of 'nothing.' What they understand by our question would probably be the same for all three. In order for us to be able to go further in our investigation, we must look for this sameness of their concept of "nothing."

Let us look at whether Ancient Greeks were talking about the same nothingness, and if yes, how they were talking about "it." The first known philosopher to talk about nothing was Thales from Miletus. His aim, like his coevals', was to find the origin of the things. He posed the question, "Does thinking about nothing make it something?". His answer was, "There can *only* be nothing if there is no one to contemplate it." (Close, 2009:5) He is quite right. It seems that no words can be uttered upon it. However, as I have mentioned above, somehow we are talking about "nothing." It is somehow around us. If that nothing becomes something when it is being talked about, then it means something comes from nothing. Nevertheless, the same Thales asserted that "something cannot emerge from No-thing, nor can things disappear into No-thing."[4] If we can somehow talk about "nothing"—and this is the same "nothing" which can only be when it is not contemplated—then "nothing" disappears into something when it is contemplated. Thus, there are two options: either he contradicts himself or the two "nothings" took place in different contexts. It is not hard to see that the first one is "nothing"; and the

[3] In this section, the word 'nothing' will be the one which has been mentioned above as averagely known, unless otherwise is stated. Therefore, at this point, a question on how it is possible for nothing to have something (such as origin) would be meaningless.
[4] *Ibid.*

other is No-thing. By the second, Thales seems to mean the absence of material things[5] and by the first, an absence of everything including thoughts and ideas. At this point, another question arises: Do ideas and thoughts exist as dependent on material things? In order not to get involved in a discussion about materialism and rationalism (since it is a deep topic that will digress our main discussion), I will take Thales' point of view, which is on concrete things. Additionally, his context is the Universe which is experienced. His discussion is similar to our modern cosmological discussions on Big Bang theory. He thought "there must be some all pervading essence from which all things have materialized."[6] From this statement we can infer that his thing-nothing talk refers to material things and the nothing is the absence of material things. This idea of him later turns into the existence of an empty space.

Parmenides of Elea made Thales' "nothing" acquire a new shape. That is the empty space. He discussed, with a series of arguments, the impossibility of the existence of an empty space, void and vacuum. After him, the word 'nothing' began to be associated with empty space for centuries. Let us look therefore at the history of the theories on the nature of empty space, from the empty space of Parmenides to the Quantum Vacuum of the 21st century.

1.5. Empty Space and "Nothing"

Is empty space really empty? This question has a great importance in the history of philosophy. Theories of physics in the 20th century on the basic forces of nature like gravity and electromagnetism have motivated physicists and philosophers to look more deeply for an answer to this question. Throughout the history, a large number of theories and concepts have been invented to come up with an explanation from Pre-Socratic times to these days. The empty space and nothingness notions of Parmenides, void of Atomists, Aristotle's place of matter, Descartes' plenum, ether of Lorentz, Grid of Frank Wilczek, dark energy and the physical vacuum of quantum mechanics are all put forward to answer the above mentioned question.

[5] The following is also referred to as Thales' definition of nothing: The absence of something. (*Ibid.)*
[6] *Ibid.*

For pure geometry, there does not seem to be any problem with the concept of empty space. However, in applied geometry and its application area, which is the field of physics, there is a great problem. The idea of a container which is not itself contained and its nature (whether it consists of particles or is a kind of medium) is challenging for physicists. The question arises when we assume that we have a giant self-destructing vacuum cleaner and try to clean all the particles in a specific area in space. What will remain? Is it nothing? It is an area in which there is nothing, and therefore it is itself nothing. How can it still be there if it is nothing?

If a question about what exists is directed to anybody, most people will have a tendency to say that there is matter in the empty space. But what is empty space? Is it nothing or something? If we say that matter is something, then is empty space matter or what? This kind of questioning seems like being asked from a materialistic point of view since it sounds as if it is assuming that only matter exists. However, what else does exist apart from matter? Could it be energy, waves, or what?

Thanks to the Theory of Special Relativity, today we already know that energy is also of the same kind as matter. If what is perceived by us as empty space was indeed energy, then would everything be just matter and could there be nothing like nothingness in the universe? In his well-known book, *Superforce*, Paul Davies lists some items that God needs to create a universe. They are matter, energy, space, time, forces, fields, order, and structure. There are totally 8 items in Davies and it seems correct from my point of view. They can be grouped in two classes. Matter, energy, space, and fields may be in one group and the rest in the other. It seems that the former ones are what exist. And the latter ones, though they may have independent existence, may be the properties of the former ones. That is to say, the latter ones answer the question of "how" it is that "what exists" exists. It looks as if the focus must be on the former ones and on the relationship among them in order for us to be able to figure out what kind of an existence empty space has. However, the focus of modern physics is on the latter group of existences. Let us look briefly at the arguments in the history which have been made to explain the concept of empty space.

As it has been already mentioned above, Parmenides associated the two nothings of Thales, namely "empty space" and "nothing." In the written history, he is the first person to discuss empty space, which would be nothing for him if it existed. Although his writings are mostly transferred to us as poems and just very few of his works have come down to us, his words on empty space are worth talking about. His philosophy which is founded on the basis of a material One, attracts physicists as well as philosophers. Although his major ambition was to solve the problem of change and to create a theory of ontology where change does not occur, he also made very influential arguments about empty space. According to him, if there were empty space, then it would be nothing. And for human beings, it is impossible to think or talk about something that does not exist. One may argue that we can talk and think about a centaur and centaurs do not exist. His response would be that a centaur is either a picture that you draw or an image that you create in your mind by using your memory. A centaur does not exist but the lower body of horses and upper body of human beings do exist. When you are talking about a centaur, you just take some parts of different bodies and bring them together. A centaur is half of a horse's body plus half of a human body both of which exist. Therefore, the concept of centaur does not come from nothing. It does come from something. Parmenides applies this reasoning to the concept of empty space. He claims that the entire universe must be one thing. If there were more than one thing in the universe, then there would necessarily be another thing between them. And this something which would be between them would have to be without any characteristic since it would not be a being. Therefore, the universe is made of one thing. Now, since that thing fills the entire universe, there is no room for empty space.

In the opposite camp to Parmenides, there appeared Atomists centuries later. They had the ambition to argue for the idea that change exists. And in order for change to occur, there must be empty space. For Atomists, the universe is made of atoms and void in which atoms can move. They developed a theory by which they can explain the problem of change. However, they introduced even a more controversial problem of how void, which is nothing, can exist. The problem that

Parmenides pointed out, which is how empty space can exist, seemed unanswerable for the Atomists.

The two opposing theories of Parmenides and Atomists were later joined by the Aristotelian notion of space, which was widely accepted by physicists and philosophers for over 15 centuries. According to him, motion of atoms is possible even without an empty space (void). For Aristotle, nature abhors vacuum and is full of matter. He rejects empty space. Aristotle's rejection of the empty space is based on his idea that an empty space would be without any kind of resistance. Without resistance each motion would be either impossible or end by reaching an infinite speed. An infinite speed is absurd and impossible. Therefore, empty space is impossible. Aristotle formulates his idea about space by using an "if and only if" connective unlike the Atomists. For the Atomists, it is just an "if" connection: if there is a body, then there must be a space which contains it, but not vice versa. However, for Aristotle, there is space if and only if there is a body. For Aristotle, if there is no body, then there is no space to contain it, but for Atomists there is space even if there is no body at all. (This will later be discussed by Newton as "absolute space.") If space was really a container-like thing, then it would be a thing.

Descartes admired Aristotle's notion of the non-existence of empty space. For Descartes, instead of empty space, there would have to be a plenum leading to an instantaneous rearrangement of the matters in the universe. For Descartes, the universe is a spherical thing and it is full of matter. Every motion would have to cause a chain reaction in a circular and a complete way. There must be some rings of bodies in which all bodies are moving at the same time. A body which enters a specific place in the universe expels another; and then the expelled body expels another, and so on. Descartes came up with a theory of "plenum", which means "full" in Greek language. He imagined that this plenum is comprised of particles which pervade everywhere. That medium has the ability to transport forces from one body to another. There are no spaces between those particles. What is more interesting is that, although all the others are talking about the empty space as something more abstract than matter is, Descartes' plenum is somehow more solid than matter and yet invisible.

This Cartesian point of view inspired his successors to try to enlighten the nature of light, which had been mostly ignored throughout the history in terms of its physical explanation. Light had been the issue of some divine laws, not physical laws. For Descartes, light must be some kind of matter, and because of that it must have a velocity. That velocity seemed infinite to him. This could have had just one explanation, which is that the propagation of light is an instantaneous vibration of a medium, which is the plenum for him. This reasoning of Descartes led his pupil Huygens to offer a wave interpretation. Huygens figured out that the propagation of light must require a finite time. In that way, the questions regarding the physical existence of light found their first plausible explanation with the wave theory and its assumption that a solid medium such as plenum physically exists and yet is unobservable. This was a cornerstone in the context of our discussion. The empty space from now on would be called something rather than nothing. This something is a medium, not empty space. This medium behaved as if it were a thing, though nothing was determinate about this thing. It was an indeterminate being. Some today argue that a totally indeterminate being cannot be regarded as a thing; it is nothing. At this point, physicists find themselves at a position they are not accustomed to being. From those years to the 21th century, empty space was regarded as a thing rather than nothing by a great majority of physicists, and philosophers mainly discussed nothingness in terms of the indeterminacy of a being. It seems to me that the theories and comments on those theories by physicists on the nature of empty space led the philosophers to discuss nothingness from the perspective of determinacy and indeterminacy of a being. That is, for physicists, an indeterminate being cannot be talked about. What Parmenides asserted was the hypothetical claim that, if it existed, space would be nothing. The problem still remained. We only have had some new approaches to deal with the problems about the nature of empty space. It was after Newton's admiration of the medium theory of Huygens that physics and metaphysics got more integrated, and this integration showed itself more vividly when Leibniz first asked the ultimate why question.

Not much later, Newton admired Huygens' theory about the existence of an invisible medium filling the entire space to transmit light, and used it to explain

gravity. For Newton, there was a similarity between gravity and the propagation of light: both have an effect on distant objects without any observable connection in between, which seems to be empty space. But there must be something to transmit those effects and it could not be empty space. The term 'ether' started to be used to refer to that medium instead of referring to empty space. Huygens' theory of ether was widely accepted and used for lots of physical explanations from the Cartesian era to the discovery of Einstein's theories of relativity. Fresnel used the theory of ether to explain the magnetic effect. He thought ether was an elastic solid. Similarly, Maxwell benefited from the ether theory for his explanations on electromagnetism.

The properties of the physical ether changed a lot in those explanations and got its final shape in Lorentz's theory of ether. Lorentz developed a model which rests on the assumption of the existence of ether. According to this model, ether has a physical existence. It is a medium in chaotic motion within an infinite flat (i.e. Euclidean) three-dimensional space. It is not homogenous. It has some local properties such that some fields of space have bumps and holes. Since it moves, it has a velocity. These properties depend on the density of the ether in that local field. Each local density determines a reference frame to satisfy the Special Theory of Relativity. Most important of all, Lorentz's model assumed that ether must have been observable via appropriate devices. This motivated Michelson, Morley and Miller to observe ether's probable effects such as winds, bumps or holes if it really exists. However, they could not get any positive result to affirm the existence of ether. Lorentz's definition of ether was accepted widely by the scientists of his era. Nevertheless, his last assumption on the observability of ether gave it a bad reputation. The enthusiasm for the classical ether has been lost due to the negative results of the ether-drift experiments of Michelson and Morley.

Despite all the failures to detect the entity which is assumed to fill the empty space, modern physics has not given up assuming a primary ingredient of physical reality which corresponds to what we perceive as empty space. Einstein tried to show that there was no need for something like ether. He thought that he could develop a theory which did not need any assumption of ether's existence. However, "Einstein … proposed the existence of similarly all-pervasive force when his calculations from

general relativity first showed that the universe could easily have had a compressed beginning and a continuing expansion thereafter" (Bryanton, 2006:112). And that force was later named as "dark energy" by quantum physicists. In his famous book *The Lightness of Being*, Nobel Prize winner in Physics, Frank Wilczek developed a theory which assumes the existence of "Grid" (p. 74). According to this theory, there is a primary ingredient of physical reality from which everything that exists in the spacetime is formed. This Grid fills all fragments of the universe. It is totally homogenous and alive with quantum activity. The Grid is dynamic. It has spontaneous activity which lets all the particles be created or destroyed. It is somehow active. It unifies the four basic forces that we know in physics which are gravity, electromagnetism, the weak nuclear force and the strong nuclear force.

In terms of the relatedness of the theories of physics to the nature of empty space, there was a slow and gradual link before the Relativity Theory, and successively, quantum mechanics. However, there appears a great loop when quantum mechanics appears to talk about vacuum. It seems that the physicists got tired of talking about a medium by trying to digest the theories logically. Their new theories are now dazzling philosophers' common sense. In those theories, they are developing multi-dimensional theories of the universe which oblige them to think about things which fall on the line between physics and metaphysics. They add continuously new dimensions but some of us still have a problem digesting the four-dimensional Einstein Universe. "Quantum vacuum is seething particles; they are continuously popping up and disappearing. Those particles are nothing and something. This is the zero-point energy." (Seife, 2000:172)

Before getting into my own account, I wanted to draw attention to how long "nothing" was talked about in association with empty space from Parmenides to the 20th century philosophy. A problem which has come with the Parmenidean notion is that "nothing" is neither physical nor is it intelligible, but somehow we still talk about it. Parmenides called what is inconceivable a mere illusion (in terms of its being). Illusions had no physical being but they still have some existence like mathematical and logical entities. If "nothing" is an illusion in his sense and it has no referent in nature, then what kind of a being has that illusionary nothing?

1.6. The Ontology of Nothing

As it has been discussed above, the reason why logical positivists argue against the legitimacy of the ultimate why question is their idea declaring that the question includes a logically contradictory word "nothingness". Is this an objection from a semantic context or an ontological context? Are we talking about an "entity" which is named wrongly? It seems that the rejection of nothingness most of the time is based on a logical contradiction found in a semantic concern rather than an ontological concern. Perhaps the ultimate why question—Why is there something rather than nothing?— may seem as if it includes a contradiction. The reason for this kind of a thinking is that nothing's wrongly equation with nonbeing; henceforth, it seems as if it is asking what kind of a being is 'no-being'(its antonymous). This question might be ill-formed if it meant by nothing the antonymous of being. Even this is also disputable. Meanwhile, how can a single term, 'nothingness,' be contradictory? Propositions can have contradictory items in them, but not single terms. To say "There are round square objects" contradicts with reality but the phrase "a round square object" alone can only be semantically contradictory in some context. For example, we can talk about the impossibility of round square objects without making any logical mistake. Why should 'nothing' alone involve a logical contradiction? Are there two concepts there, "no" and "thing"? The claims of logical contradiction are mostly based on this kind of a mistake made around of the mis-integrity of semantic-ontological concepts. That is to say, a problem of language in some cases is perceived as if it were the problem of reality itself. However, the biggest difficulty about ontological concepts is the fact that whether logic alone could solve problems in the mess of ontology such as the rationality of the reality, or the reality of causation, which will be the topic of following chapters.

So far in this chapter, I have talked about the endeavors of physicists and philosophers to find a referent for the term 'nothing' in the nature. Those endeavors have mostly sought the ultimate nature of empty space. Empty space has proven difficult to be detected in any way. Even if we think of a thought experiment in which perfect vacuum is constructed somehow, the device to detect that vacuum will have a gravitational force upon it which disturbs its perfectness. But equally, we

cannot prove its non-existence even by showing that there is no room for empty space in the nature.[7] This is the reason why we still sustain our doubt on the possibility that there might be some kind of empty space out there. No matter how much evidence we do find about the somethingness of the empty space, I believe the physicists, in addition to metaphysians, will still be asking "What if is there another layer behind this medium of empty space or electromagnetic field or quantum vacuum?". What may be the reason for this curiosity about the nature of empty space? One reason for this curiosity may be the traditional understanding of us in terms of the movements of bodies. The common sense of Atomists which declares a body needs a void to move in has transformed when the propagation of light was held by an explanation of a wave theory. The propagation of a light is similar to the movements of waves. However, waves are propagating on a surface of a medium. When Einstein declared in Special Theory of Relativity that we do not need an ethereal medium for light to explain its wave-like propagation, the common sense of people has been confused. If it is not even a medium then what is it that light propagate on? Today we already know that empty space has underlying background energy that exists in space throughout the entire Universe. All the evidences lead us to a closed universe system where there is no place for 'nothing'. Nevertheless, we cannot reduce our context only in physics and evidences belong to it since universe itself is a more complex concept to post theories about than the physical beings in the universe. At this point we are looking for ontological possibilities, an ontological possibility for nothing. Now the question turns into "What can be an ontological possibility?". How can we make judgments on ontological possibilities?

There are two different levels of ontological possibilities here. One is a possibility like possible worlds; a null world might have been. The other is that our universe (as an object of ontology) may be filling a different emptiness as ether does for physical objects. This may look like an unsupported speculation; however, this is no different than asking where Big Bang is expanding into. Expanding into itself is not a normal phenomenon that we use every day; rather, we have not a single similar

[7] Nothingness is such a concept that we cannot prove or disprove either its existence or non-existence by empirical endeavors.

case like that. This so-called possibility is an ontological one but claiming to be a physical one. This is a physical possibility that invades the area of ontology. Therefore, we can call it actual possibility. This is an ontological possibility which does not contradict with reality. It is in our actual world but exists as a possibility. To give an analogy, this actual possibility is no different before the coming into existence of the ultimate particles (not atoms since atoms also have particles) until they were discovered. For Atomists, they were mere actual possibilities. If we discover the nature of empty space, then we will look for another emptier or more basic layer behind it. When I say "empty space" here, I mean it to be the same thing as the void of the Ancient Greeks. Their void is more fundamental than the concept of empty space as modern physicists consider it. Dark energy or even an ether-like medium does not correspond to their void. Ancient Greeks meant by 'void' a null state of existence which lies at the layer of eternity, but being cannot have any kind of interaction with it. It seems it goes on *ad infinitum* both spatially and temporally.

In the next chapter, different aspects of nothingness will be discussed. But for now, in order to be able proceed in our investigation, I will first define 'nothingness' as we averagely understand it, since this is the most necessary step for our investigation. If we cannot explain what we mean by 'nothingness,' we cannot make sensible arguments on the ultimate why question.

The keywords related to nothingness can be summarized as sameness, ontology, actual possibility, lacking any kind of property, not a negation of being, only legitimate when it is dressed, all pervasive, all symmetrical since it has not parts, absolute, cannot be related, cannot be relative. Even dimensionality exists in nothingness. As it is averagely understood, it is an idealization, a medium which is not affected by any being. The nothingness in my definition seems to have a lot of properties but none of them belongs to it actually. They are all and only analogies that I attribute to it in order for the reader to contemplate and understand it.

Therefore, my definition will be: "Nothingness is a conceptual idealization[8] which corresponds to an entity as an ontological possibility that cannot be deviated by any being." This nothingness is an analytic conceptual idealization since we cannot fully comprehend, conceptualize or visualize it. It is the ultimate layer, pure dimensionality. If we could somehow fully understand or conceptualize it, I would call it concept rather than conceptualized idealization. However, we can conceptualize its idealization; from the process that goes through idealization we can somehow averagely conceive it.

As for its nature, it is all symmetrical since it has no parts. It is eternal since it contains no body. And it is incorporeal. Therefore, it cannot be conceptualized but it can be conceptually idealized. It is by its nature unreachable in the nature of being. It is beyond what is corporeal yet not a transcendental being, since even transcendental beings are beings; they are not nothing. These characterizations may seem unclear now since sufficient explanation has not been given yet, but after the following paragraphs, it will make sense.

The traditional mistake has always been to see nothingness as not referable to. In every case, if we talk about nothingness, we have idealized it from a contextual standpoint. To illustrate, in a semantic context, we have attached a word to it: "nothingness". In a scientific context, we have attributed to it a property like undetectability. Our starting point here is empty space. This space shall not be understood as our scientific notion of space which is dependent on matter, whose only function is to contain matter. We shall assume that space is not absolute and has no physical being in any sense, such as curvability or being a container. In a logical context, more specifically in set theory, nothingness has been regarded as the idealization of the negation of the universal set. This is always confused with the pure negation. Nothingness is not the empty set in set theory, since empty set has also a function as being a set, although it does not contain anything. But being a

[8] To understand what it means to be an idealized concept, I will make an analogy between the concept of limit in mathematics and this concept. In mathematics, we accept ½ + ¼ + 1/8….. = 1. Although we cannot conceptualize 1 as the conclusion of this summation, we can have an idealized concept as 1 being the conclusion of this process. In order to prevent any misunderstanding, maybe I should use a different word instead of concept, but I will not do that since the sameness of it makes it a kind of concept. I call this kind of a concept an idealized concept.

container makes it a thing, not nothing. It is not also the negation of universal set, but it has a parallelism with the negated universal set since it becomes more distinctive to be realized, when the existence of universe is negated[9].

For theology, this starting point has been regarded as the indeterminate state of the universe before God created it. And for logical positivists, a proposition like "Nothingness is an idealized concept" must either be empirically verifiable or analytically free from contradiction. A starting point for criticizing logical positivists would be to point out their own statement's lack of truth-maker. Their proposition is that nothingness cannot be any kind of subject since it does not exist. However, evolutionary theory claims that the conceptualizing faculty of our brain has evolved thanks to our sensory organs' functioning and the brains' copying it (Demirsoy, 1993). By this means, after the immediate experience, the brain can still use it as a concept. And our 5 sensory organs evolved randomly during the first evolution of mankind in relation with the state of the earth's atmosphere. We know that just like human beings, the atmosphere also has gone through evolution. This evolution of the atmosphere during the evolution of human beings prepared the conditions for the emergence of the 5 sensory organs. If the evolution of human beings had completed itself some thousands of years ago or later, we would have different sensory organs, or we would still have the same organs with different scales of sensation. For example, the scale of dogs for hearing or hawks for seeing is larger than us. We could be detecting electromagnetic fields directly by a sensory organ now. We could receive and sense radiation. We could detect vibrations or propagations of light beams. These are actual possibilities. In short, even our analytic thinking faculty might have evolved in parallel with our sensory faculties according to the above mentioned discussions. We know that our sensory faculties might have been different. There is a contingency here. Our sensation faculty is not a necessary one. Therefore, we should at least have doubts about the absoluteness of our analytic thinking and sensation faculty.

[9] This point will be clarified in the last chapter.

To investigate what there is, we should take the alternative cases to somethingness into consideration. For logical positivists, "There might have been another something" is a legitimate proposition and we should regard the alternative in each situation as another somethingness. However, for them "There might have been nothing" is illegitimate since nothingness is conceptually contradictory. This argument of them makes a huge mistake. That is, they turn the contingent world into a necessary being without any explanation or a layer. This point will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

For physicists today, a question like where or when the Big Bang happened is a meaningless question since time and space also emerged with it. Our ultimate why question is in a sense similar to the question why the Big Bang happened. Physicists would argue that Big Bang is not an event; therefore, we do not have to look for an agent, space and time. Hartle and Hawking model assumes this. Then what is Big Bang? Which one of those mentioned existences is it? Is it matter, energy, space, time, a bunch of forces, fields, order or structure, or the unity of them? When we try to imagine or conceptualize the Big Bang, we naturally reach our mind's limit. What I want to say here is that the limit is nothingness. Nothingness is not the state that we can reach when we remove all the existents. It is not the absolute absence of things. It is not a negation of something. This is the mistake that leads us to the paradox of nothingness. Traditionally, people always think that nothingness is the state of absolute absence of things, or merely empty space, in a futility of context or lack of significance, or indeterminateness. Something and nothingness are not the negations of each other but different types of entities. There is nothingness, plus there is a being out there. This nothingness can be regarded as having a parallelism with the void argument of the Atomists of Ancient Greeks. They are not mutually exclusive since being can in no way disturb nothingness. To claim that there is being should not exclude that there may be or might have been nothingness. However, just from this we cannot conclude that there is nothingness. Here let me underline the point that nothingness is a possibility that we cannot disregard if we have an ontological curiosity.

Nothingness is the savior of our minds when it reaches at its limits. In *Critique of Pure Reason*, Immanuel Kant describes the antinomies of human reason and the pure intuitions that determine our experiences. Those intuitions are space and time. Without them we cannot make any concept of experience. And without nothingness we cannot determine any kind of being. Nothingness is the ontological layer intuition of human being in the same sense. This does not mean that nothingness is relative to human kind, as neither are space and time. Space and time are the pure intuitions for epistemology, and nothingness is the one for ontology. We can talk about nothingness in the way that we can talk about space and time as intuitions.

Earlier, I started discussing the ultimate why question, and now that we at least have some more explicit ideas, I will redefine nothingness. Nothingness is a conceptual idealization which is the pure ontological intuition of us that functions as a natural layer of ontology whereas it has no interaction and does not share a single property with being.

The strongest objection to this definition would be why does it matter, if it does not have any kind of interaction with being? My answer is the basic motivation of ontology to reveal the limitedness of human reason to understand the mass of existence. The only relation of nothingness is a relation that we make up—that is, the fact that it is an alternative to being. Furthermore, we have an ontological intuition that may correspond to nothingness as a different realm. This point will be clarified in the last chapter.

Why does nothingness—this conceptually idealized entity—matter? It is significant because ontology is an actual mess. Nothingness is in ontology. To say that there is something is the pre-acceptance of ontology. We think that there is something, and then we are trying to figure them out one by one. What is there? To ask what there is also has the assumption that there is also something that we have made up in our minds, and it does not exist actually. Otherwise, we could not be talking about existence as it is a predicate or a property. Existence is not a predicate

under the larger category of being an "entity"; however, this analogy (to think existence as a predicate) helps us while talking about an alternative realm to being.

We would like to distinguish between what is there out in the nature and what we have fabricated. A discussion on nothingness will prove that those we have fabricated are also not futile. We want to utilize them in our search for reality. That is to say, from reality we make up rational beings and then in circularity we use those rational beings to explain reality. The nothingness of other disciplines will help metaphysics to talk about its own nothingness. In the case of examples like chimeras (centaur, unicorn) it is easy to figure out that they are our production; however, conceptually idealized entities like nothingness are the most difficult topics to deal with. To think nothingness is only our fabrication as pure negation would be a huge mistake, since we do not have an absolute idea about the ultimate nature of somethingness' being.

The other strong objection would be that we as human beings are beings, and in order for us even to be able to talk about nothingness, we must somehow have an interaction with it. That would mean nothingness interacted with being. If we could somehow interact with it, we would have knowledge of it. That is the reason why nothingness is actually possible but not actual. This may seem an argument like now that "being" is limited, beyond that limit, there must be an entity. In a positive way there must be a necessary being like God, and in a negative way, there must be a necessary nonbeing like nothingness. This would be another huge mistake. This is the problem of Leibniz' arguments about whether we can infer "is" from a "must" statement. A statement like "There is nothingness since it must be" clearly misleads the philosopher in her/his inquiry.

A weaker objection would be how we can talk about it if it does not bear any of the properties that we observe in being. The major problems of metaphysics so far have proven that some properties that we are talking about are not compatible with the being there in the actuality. These properties are absoluteness, all symmetricalness, eternality, indeviancy, ultimate rest (of Aristotle), changelessness. These are all attributable to nothingness since none of these can belong to being.

Everything that we call contingent in this world is relative. None of them are absolute. We cannot create or observe an absolute symmetry since we cannot have influence on the smallest particles as Zeno proved by his arguments. Each being has a finite amount of energy, none of them are eternal, each being is in interaction with something else, and can be deviated. Even light beams can be deviated. Even the empty space or time can be disturbed. Everything is changing continuously; even when something looks like it is in balance, it has potential energy in it which disrupts its rest. Those properties that I have listed above are the foundations of the major problems of metaphysics. Those properties are idealized properties indeed, which cannot be attributed to any being. These properties are useful to ideally conceptualize nothingness.

A final objection to this definition would be against the possibility that it involves a mental confusion rather than its possibility to be in the nature. For Sartre, *Negatites*, the product of negating process is absolutely related to the human process. "They derive their origin from an act, an expectation, or a project of human being […] The relations of man in the world, which the *negatites* indicate, have nothing in common with the relations a posteriori which are brought out by empirical activity." (Sartre, 1984:24) We as human beings are the only causes of nothingness. There is no nothingness in the nature for him.

However, this would not be an argument against my definition since I do not claim to find nothingness in the realm of being. It is true that nothingness can be argued only logically, and logic can claim ontological possibilities only if its argument does not contain any contradiction. Therefore, it is too clear that there cannot be nothingness in the nature. However, this does not mean that there is not an ontological possibility for the existence of nothingness. This would be a mistake of reducing all the entities into being's realm. A trial to find nothing in a thing would be a mistake, but nothing can be a layer for being.

A more interesting question would be "Can nothingness be a property of a 'being'?". The difficulty here also lies in semantics. If there were any kind of being that has a property of nothingness, and if we still call it a being, this would not be a

problem of ontology but a problem with the limits of our semantic usage. To prevent this kind of a problem, we could produce a new word for that kind of being as many other philosophers do. However, I do not wish to do that. By saying entity, I mean a concept which is outside the being's realm. Thus, I will continue to use the word 'nothingness' since my motivation is to clarify what nothingness as it is averagely understood brings us to enlighten our views on ontological issues and reality. Another significant point here is that the above mentioned properties do not belong to nothingness originally; they are just properties that we attribute to it in order to conceive its idealization. One must not understand that nothingness has positive properties such as the above mentioned ones and the negative properties which cannot be attributed to it since the rest would belong to being. Nothingness must not be understood as a preexisting *substratum* from which being is created, as some scientists do. As Aquinas argued, "if at one time there was nothing, there would be nothing even now." (Rundle, 2004:111)

From our analysis on nothingness so far, I do not see any contradiction in the nature of nothingness. Nothingness is an ontological possibility without any logical contradiction. It may well be an alternative to being, or a different kind from being. It is not an abstract negation of being, or somethingness. Yes, it is true that its existence is not empirically verifiable. However, it does not include any contradiction from an analytic perspective. The definition given above will be used as an assistance in our inquiry about the ultimate why question "Why is there something rather than nothing?" and the possibility of answering it.

CHAPTER 2

THE ULTIMATE WHY QUESTION

2.1. A Physicalistic Approach

In Chapter 1, I gave a definition of nothingness in order for us to be able to discuss the ultimate why question now. I believe that our definition shows that there is at least one way of talking about nothingness in a legitimate way without falling into any logical contradiction. Now it is time to focus on our question, "Why is there something rather than nothing?" *Prima facie,* it seems that this question is seeking for an ultimate explanation. Human curiosity demands explanations to be able to adapt her/himself to the environment. Even for the smallest events we immediately look for an explanation. If a raindrop falls on our head, we look upwards for an explanation. At that time, we observe the existence of rain clouds. When this is repeated, we acquire an intuition and realize the relation between clouds and rain drops. This is where our causation faculty starts to function. The idea of causation rests on two concepts: cause and effect. In our example, the effect is the rain drops' falling and the cause is the existence of rain clouds. After several times of rain experience, we no longer wonder about the cause of rain drops and start to be curious about rain clouds. Why are they there?

Our previous explanation concerning raindrops has been completed but it brings another demand for explanation. The cause of the current event becomes the effect of the previous one. This looks as if it would lead to an infinite regress. However, when we realize that the raindrops falling from the rain clouds were raised from the earth in a previous time, we realize the circularity. Our scientific curiosity at this point seems to be satisfied with the explanations at the point where we have realized the circularity. Nevertheless, at some edges of our mind, there occurs a curiosity about the first stages of this circularity. A physicalistic approach might expand the range of this explanation. It can go back to the first formation of water molecules. However, each explanation will use another entity for its own purpose. At the end, we will find ourselves in another circularity; or worse, we will come to an end where no explanation is available.

In each case, we ask the question: What was the first ring of this chain? One answer may be that there is no first ring of this chain. This is a finite circularity which is repeated infinitely many times. An infinite circular causal chain like this one means that the last effect is the cause of the first cause. Or, it means that the last effect and the first cause are the same entities. Both of these explanations are absurd. Throughout all of our explanations we have observed that in any specific case, the cause and the effect are different entities. This is the basic rule of explanation. There can be given many examples of situations for which we look for an explanation, and the most significant of these situations is the one in our ultimate why question. We can explain each particular in the world by relating them to each other, but does the world as a unity of those particles have an explanation?

This question is understood by physicists as there is a demand for an explanation like the one in Big Bang Theory. However, Big Bang Theory cannot be an answer for this question since it can at best give an explanation for the question "how" rather than "why." What we are looking for here is an answer like that there is a cause of the universe. However, any theory produced by the physicalistic approach will imprison us in the universe, since a physicalistic view is confined to the physical universe. This means that a physicalistic approach can be useful only if the universe were self-explanatory. Being self-explanatory means being a necessary existent. However, we are all sure about the fact that this world is contingent. That means the world might have been different or there might not have been a world at all. Our question is asking about the issues beyond the horizons of spacetime.

One major problem here is about scientific idealizations. The concept of a physicalistic universe is clearly a scientific idealization. We can in no way directly observe the whole of the universe, as it is a part of a unity. Similarly, we cannot empirically verify the creation of the universe. All kinds of explanations of it would merely be theoretical hypotheses with some evidences physically too strong but metaphysically unsatisfactory. It is a significant concern for science to talk about the universe as it was an object which is the ultimate unity. Scientific common sense interprets the ultimate why question as "What kind of a physical law can be found behind the creation of the universe?". Now, owing to Hubble's astronomical

observations, scientists preclude that the universe has a beginning. Big Bang Theory is commonly accepted since one of its predictions—the back layer microwave radiation which has been observed in all directions—proved itself to be true. According to this theory, the universe is a 3-D sphere which has a beginning with a rapid inflation and expanding into an unknown territory, which might be into itself. That inflation was natural but did not need a cause. There is no specific agent or cause behind it. Therefore, it is a kind of inflation without a cause, since that inflation was not an event. Only events need a causal relation in spacetime.

Consequently, the original Big Bang Theory and all the other theories including "The Theory of Everything" and so-called nothingness theories display a presumption on the claim that they can explain the sudden appearance of everything from nothing. This is interesting enough because of the fact that many scientists today can talk about 'nothing.' How can science, which is based only on experiments, talk about "nothing," which is undetectable? This explanation can help us to go further back into its being a state where the entire universe was a teeny tiny ball where it is maximally condensed and because of this density there was nothing physical, even the space and time. But this state does not make it "nothing." The reason that lies behind the usage of 'nothing'[10] by scientists can be summarized by an argument like:

Pr 1: "An actual infinity cannot exist."

Pr 2: "An infinite temporal regress of events is an actual infinite."

Therefore, "An infinite temporal regress of events cannot exist."

The aim here is to avoid claiming that being must be eternal, and beyond the edge of being there must have been nothing. However, it is still something and still a contingent something which demands explanation. The ultimate explanation given by the physicalistic approach does not help us with the ultimate why question at all.

[10] Although not all scientist explicitly uses the word 'nothing,' all their endeavor to determine an indeterminate mass before the Big Bang, or quantum vacuum all refer to "nothing" since they reject the existence of any kind of being before the Big Bang. From a scientific point of view, to say there was no being means there was nothing.

Then why do we seek it at this area of science where the cause and the effect are the same and it explains itself by its nature? This is not compatible with any of our experiences we have had so far. This cannot be a topic of direct observation for us. Therefore, it seems that we cannot get any empirical success in this pursuit. This leads the physicalistic philosophers to fall into desperation with an idea that this question is not answerable.

2.2. Cosmological Argument of Theists

The traditional way of seeking an answer for the ultimate why question is mostly to investigate it either from a physicalistic point of view as it has been shown above, or from a theistic approach. Although many theists of our day do not care about any logical standpoint in their concern with religion; or to say, whether faith can have any foundation like a logical argument as a layer or not, theism indeed sincerely rests on a kind of argument type called cosmological argument. This argument type is very peculiar since it is accepted by theists without any further demand. This argument is self-satisfactory for theists. It makes inferences from the certain facts of the world and as a conclusion reaches the idea that there is a very special being which can be shown as the ultimate cause and the layer of this world. The enthusiasm of this argument is shared by many philosophers as well. The circularity of contingent causal relations of this world can somehow come to the conclusion that an ultimate agent like God exists. The argument is unique since its unique aim is to find an answer for the ultimate why question.

From my point of view our ultimate why question has been evolved throughout history. "What is the ultimate substance of all reality?" was the major concern for Ancient Greek metaphysicians. It seems like this question was also caused by the same kind of curiosity as our ultimate why question "why is there something rather than nothing?" is. The transition from a "what" question to a "why" question indicates the Medieval Arabic philosophers' effect. The materialist idealist[11]

[11] Although today materialism and idealism seem to take place at opposite sides, the discussions of Ancient Greeks show that they were talking about matter as an ideal concept. When Thales was talking about 'water', it seems that he was not only referring to H2O. Water was an ideal being in some sense. Therefore, I call it materialist idealist as many others, like Copleston, do.

approach of Ancient Greeks was not adopted by medieval philosophers. Thomas Aquinas and Avicenna meditated on the cosmological argument. Those meditations found their ultimate meaning in our ultimate why question when Leibniz first asked it. For Reichenbach (2010), the cosmological argument shared by theists can be formulated as the following logical steps,

1. A contingent being (a being that if it exists can not-exist) exists.
2. This contingent being has a cause of or explanation for its existence.
3. The cause of or explanation for its existence is something other than the contingent being itself.
4. What causes or explains the existence of this contingent being must either be solely other contingent beings or include a non-contingent (necessary) being.
5. Contingent beings alone cannot provide an adequate causal account or explanation for the existence of a contingent being.
6. Therefore, what causes or explains the existence of this contingent being must include a non-contingent (necessary) being.
7. Therefore, a necessary being (a being that if it exists cannot not-exist) exists.

The starting point of the argument is that a contingent being exists, and the conclusion derived at the end is that a necessary being exists. Let us analyze each of the premises of this argument to see how the conclusion is derived. The first premise declares that a contingent being exists. A contingent proposition is neither necessarily true nor necessarily false. In this sense, it is not the negation of necessary propositions. If we value A as contingently true, that means it might have been false. Or for its falsehood, the reverse is valid, which means A might have been true. That is to say, A is true in some worlds while it may be false in other possible worlds. In this argument, we must look into the nature to find the referent of "a contingent being" stated in the proposition. What is that "a contingent being"? Is it any particular thing around us? Can it be a table, human being, Earth? Actually, all of these objects are contingent beings. There might not have been any of those objects but somehow they are. They exist because some other contingent beings have caused them. It seems like there is not any problem with the first premise. Therefore, it is true.

Second proposition states that this contingent being has a cause of or explanation for its existence. Is there an explanation for all of these contingent beings? What is the explanation for a chair's existence? The answer is that a carpenter has made it. Then, the question "What caused the carpenter's being?" shall follow. A simple answer would be that his parents caused. It seems that the second proposition is also true. Rather, the third proposition seems to be derived from the first two propositions. Contingency by definition bears an inference that it is caused by another being. Therefore, it is clearly seen in the second premise that any contingent being requires another contingent being for its being's own explanation.

Till this proposition, we have only referred to contingency but the fourth proposition talks about a necessary being. The statement is that what causes or explains the existence of this contingent being must either be solely other contingent beings or include a non-contingent being. In the first three statements, we have seen that every particular being around us is contingent. But now, the propositions state a possibility that there may be some beings which are not contingent. Why has there been a transition into non-contingency? In logic, we can have either contingent or necessary propositions but in factual world, we have only contingent particular beings. Or is not it like that? The possibility of a non-contingent being seems to be inferred from the logical concepts alone which have no referent in the reality. We can talk about logically necessary propositions, not logically necessary beings at this point. The necessary being that is mentioned in this premise has no basement. However, this is only a hypothesis which claims that if there were any other type of being other than contingent being, it would be necessary being since a cause of a being must either be from itself or from another being. We can go to the next premise by accepting that a necessary being would be an alternative for a contingent being, keeping in mind that this is just a hypothesis.

The fifth premise is "Contingent beings alone cannot provide an adequate causal account or explanation for the existence of a contingent being." This statement brings a seeking for adequacy and uncovering the circularity which we have mentioned in the first chapter with its awake. The term "adequate" is the key word

here. So far, we have not talked about adequacy of an explanation. However, has not it been adequate while we have been showing the carpenter as a cause for the existence of a chair? How can we determine whether an explanation is adequate or not?

We know what it means to be the sufficient cause for an event. A sufficient cause is a complete causal mechanism which can be defined as a set of events that inevitably produce the effect. However, our premise looks like talking about something different. It talks about sufficient condition for a being's existence. Rather, it talks about a "sufficient being" which will provide the sufficient condition for a contingent being. It is like saying that without water and oxygen, there can be no human life. To illustrate, carbon element can be shown as the sufficient being for a living being. From this respect, we can say that our carpenter in the third premise is a sufficient being for the contingent being of a chair. The statement's main emphasis is that every contingent being has a sufficient being but the ultimate sufficient being cannot have any sufficient being since they are in a hierarchical status. The last contingent being cannot be the sufficient being for the first sufficient being since there will be a two-way sufficiency. This is prohibited by the very definition of contingency. If it were, then we could say that the particulars of reality are contingent but its totality is necessary. But this necessity would be derived from an absurd conclusion. Therefore, this premise is true.

The sixth statement and the last are both conclusions. The sixth proposition talks about a logical necessity which is raised from the contingency of reality. The last includes a transition into a necessary being from logical necessity. This transition best manifests itself in Leibniz's account. In *Cosmological Argument*, Reichenbach summarized Leibniz's account on this issue as,

> Leibniz (1646–1716) appealed to a strengthened principle of sufficient reason, according to which "no fact can be real or existing and no statement true without a sufficient reason for its being so and not otherwise" (Monadology, §32). Leibniz uses the principle to argue that the sufficient reason for the "series of things comprehended in the universe of creatures" (§36) must exist outside this series of contingencies and is found in a necessary being that we call God. (2010)

From this passage of Leibniz, it can be inferred that he has an assumption as the reality is ultimately intelligible. First of all, he has a negative way of arguing as such that "no fact can be real or existing and no statement true without a sufficient reason for its being so and not otherwise." (Leibniz, 1697) He claims that if a being is not comprehensible by us, then that thing is not real. This statement is the starting point of the major confusion lies at the heart of the cosmological argument. Second, logical necessity is needed to explain the nature of contingency as a conditional concept but somehow it returns into the reality itself, and that reality turns back as the condition of what it has conditioned. In order to escape from the circularity of contingency, he puts forward a new type of circularity although he claims that it is not circularity since necessary beings do not need any sufficient reason. Only contingent beings demand for sufficient reason. Furthermore, that logically necessary being of him somehow turns into a specific being as God. The equivalence of him regarding logically necessary being with God is out of our topic for the time being since it is another huge topic. The defense of Leibniz against my critiques above might have been as such that the necessary being's non-existence is logically inconceivable but this also falls into the rejection of my first criticism above.

To the conclusion, in the previous section under the title of physicalistic approach, we have seen that science talks about facts on the reality which is not comprehensible. The Hartle-Hawking model of the universe proposes a sphere which is finite yet unbounded. Or, Big Bang Theory is proposing an expansion which does not expand in anything. The perfect density of the first state of universe has been continuously gaining a volume but how a volume is expanding into itself is incomprehensible. That is to say, science proposes a reality which is not comprehensible; and theists with their cosmological argument proposes a being which is only logically possible and does not have a referent in reality. It looks like at this point there is an elementary choice between idealism and realism. The supporters of each group seem to pre-accept something. However, what we are looking in our quest is the absolute truth. We cannot give way any kind of easy choices. Thus, we have to analyze the ontological arguments of both in an analytic perspective.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYTIC PERSPECTIVE ON THE ULTIMATE WHY QUESTION

3.1. Analysis of the Physicalistic Approach

So far, I have discussed the common perspectives of two disciplines—physics and theology—on the ultimate why question. They have two different answers which differ in the belief that they are based on. The scientific belief is that nothing cannot be detectable and cannot be made observable. Therefore, there can only be something. This something is alone enough to explain the existence of itself without referring to any other thing. There are ready-made theories explaining how the universe came into being. As for the "why" question, there can be found a natural law which causes the universe's being or becoming into existence. The universe exists as it is whether we can comprehend it ultimately or not. There is a slow process in which the laws of nature disclose itself.

On the other hand, theists strongly argue that this kind of a physical explanation cannot be given since it demands an eternal time to be figured out. We do not need to wait for that. From the contingent beings in the world, we can affirm that everything has a cause apart from itself. Therefore, the contingent being needs a necessary being outside the contingent sets. We can easily infer that there is a necessary being outside this contingent world, which is the cause of contingent beings. This is too simple as it is in this illustration that if there is no composer, there will not be a song. And if there was no necessary being, there would not be a contingent world now. Reason can tell us about the nature by looking through the contingent things. Therefore, their answer is that there is something rather than nothing since there is a necessary being who/which caused and still sustains the contingent world.

Both of the arguments are strong enough to have that much audience. However, what we are looking is an answer which is not based on easy decisions as

both groups have. Both groups bear choices which cannot be layered without an assumption. And those assumptions are found to be faulty by the other group. Therefore, we either need to figure out how to reconcile these two groups on a single answer; or we have to reject the arguments of both in order to find a new approach that gives the answer. In order to achieve this, we need an analytic inquiry on the problem. A philosophical analysis is needed. By this means, we can figure out the roots of the problem. Perhaps we can give an answer which cannot be rejected by both of the groups. It seems like both groups have some assumptions which are helpful to construe their systems yet problematic. Let us examine what is problematic in order to get rid of them.

My first observation is that scientific approach talks about "our contingent being" as the universe rather than a being in the universe while the cosmological argument argues about any contingent being in the world. This is quite ironic since theology talks about ideal entities in general whereas science does about material objects. In their contexts, just the reverse is at the issue. All the particles in the universe are concrete objects; therefore, a contingent being in the universe may well be a detectable being. However, whether we can infer the physicality of the universe from the individual's physicality can be questionable I think. Scientific explanation demands the best explanation, and if there is at least one explanation about something, it can be accepted as an explanation. Therefore, the way it asks questions about particular objects in the world cannot be applied to the ultimate why question exactly. In order for the ultimate why question to be legitimate, that something in the question—Why is there something rather than nothing?—must be understood as the universe from a scientific point of view. This is because every contingent particular being can have an explanation by another contingent being.

The scientific problem starts at this point. The term universe is not merely a physical concept here. It may be said a physico-ontological concept. All the particulars in the universe may be a directly observable objects yet not the universe itself. Therefore, physics is doing its own metaphysics here while talking about universe in this context. A physician can formulate this question as "What kind of a natural law can be observed behind Big Bang?". Or it must seek at least a rule, a

repetition, etc. Therefore, I call universe in the context of the ultimate why question is a physico-ontological concept and it can be talked about as a different type of idealization.

This idealization idealizes the universe as it shares the same physicality as its constituents do. Scientific explanation sometimes needs idealizations. "An idealization is a deliberate simplification of something complicated with the objective of making it more tractable." (Frigg & Hartmann, 2012) Frictionless planes, point masses, infinite velocities, isolated systems can be illustrated as idealization models for scientific explanations. Can we put the idealization of universe into the same category with them? Let us first examine this.

The meaning behind this idealization can be discussed within the range of the whole and its parts problem of metaphysics. In metaphysics, the whole is a unity. It is about the mutual properties of what the parts of a unity have and the whole itself has in common. The problem is about the being of this property and the possibility of a property to be talked as a being. From the scientific perspective, all contingent beings have a property as existing in a spacetime. What we are empirically observing as beings are just the parts of a unity called universe. Therefore, the ultimate why question of science turns into the question "Why does the universe exist?". Since we cannot observe this universe from outside of it, we can only try to get knowledge about it by analyzing its parts. Nonetheless, this looks problematic.

What Hubble observed is not directly the expansion of the universe. It just observed that galaxies are getting away from each other at some velocity. This is concluded by the detection of red shift. Red shift (of light beams coming through us) is an event observed when an object is getting away from us. The scientific explanation for this discovery might well only be that galaxies are getting away from each other. From this alone, the expansion of the universe cannot be inferred since we do not know what is the unity for the galaxies that we observe. There are only too abstract theories about it. The universe mentioned as a unity of galaxies may be simply a part of another bigger system. However, what we mean by the idealized universe cannot be as such. We can only talk about a unity of galaxies but not the

ultimate unity, wholeness. Our concept of universe cannot be a part of another unity. We must be careful about the usage of word "universe" here. Scientific approach mostly misses this point that universe is an idealization not a physical object in terms of this context. This idea shall not be understood as calling universe not physical. Nobody can claim that the parts of universe are not physical. However, whether the whole of universe itself carries the same properties with its parts can be discussable in my mind. The whole may be different from the sum of its parts.

What is more, this whole and its parts problem is also linked with the problem of induction. From specific cases like an event between observed galaxies, a generalization is tried to be held by induction method. The argument is that if there is an expansion of the areas among galaxies (even if it is observed in every direction), then the universe must be expanding. This statement comes to a fast conclusion by a faulty generalization. We cannot induce that from those data alone. We can ask whether the properties of parts can also be seen at the unity itself. However, this is an unclear question since the property here is existence. Many philosophers like Russell argue that existence is not a property. For Russell,

> [T]he move from the contingency of the components of the universe to the contingency of the universe commits the Fallacy of Composition, which mistakenly concludes that since the parts have a certain property, the whole likewise has that property. Hence, whereas we can ask for the cause of particular things, we cannot ask for the cause of the universe or the set of all contingent beings. (Reichenbach, 2010)

With a simple analogy, we can support this claim by saying that any being in this world has an existence in spacetime but the universe cannot exist in a spacetime. Some objections for this argument are raised by Koons. For him,

> If something is contingent, it contains a contingent part. The whole and part overlap, and by virtue of overlapping, have a common part. Since the part in virtue of which they overlap is wholly contingent, the whole likewise must be contingent. (Reichenbach, 2010).

Clearly, he is talking about the well-known brick and wall argument. This argument states that if the parts of a wall are made out of brick, then the whole wall is made out of brick. It is true that when all of the parts are explained, the whole is by nature explained. The particular property is valid also for the whole in this example. However, at this example, we can observe all of the particulars of the wall one by one whether they are made out of brick or not. In our concern with universe, we cannot observe all of the contingent beings. Even if we could observe all contingent beings, the ultimate why question would still be demanding an answer due to the circularity argument discussed above. The wall is not an idealized unity, and has a cause outside there.

Scientific explanation at this subject remains limited, partial and incomplete. As Woodward states, "[…] most models of explanation assume that it is possible for a set of claims to be true, accurate, supported by evidence, and so on and yet unexplanatory…" (Woodward, 2011). Regularity and repetition are mostly sought for a scientific explanation. Also a sound deductive argument which is concluded by premises including at least one law of nature cannot be the applied for our question.

For science, being cannot be questioned in terms of its existentiality. Since being extended and existence is the first presumption of science. It is clear that this is a topic of metaphysics. Science cannot come up with a solution by itself. However, modern physics has created an abstract concept of dimensionality which claims that science can also produce arguments as metaphysics does. With a theory of dimensionality, modern physics claims to be capable of talking about universe and nothingness in a plausible way. This theory claims that the universe has eleven dimensions. All the physical entities which may be categorized as matter, energy, space, time, forces, fields, order, and structure can be extended at the same point of the universe. It makes an analogy to conceive this unity as in a three dimensional space, only matter exists at a specific area. In a 4 dimensional area time is added to that matter at that area, and so on. Finally, all the physical entities are extended in one single point which is the tenth dimension (Bryanton, 2006:151).

This reminds us Parmenidean One. Imagine a dimension in which the whole universe with all its entities extended in one single point. If this theory is true, then it will not tell us the nature of empty space. However, we would know that empty space which seems as nothing in 3 dimensions is indeed something in another dimension. This sounds as if it can be a plausible answer to the question of how nothing can be something. The answer is that nothing in one dimension is something in another dimension. Still, science cannot talk about the ontological nothing. Even it is in another dimension, it is still something physical.

By saying that nothing comes from nothing, might Parmenides have had such an idea that the two nothings in this statement exist in different dimensions? We cannot know that, but what we can know is that today quantum mechanics' claim that physical vacuum can create particles out of nothing finds a meaning within this perspective. In conclusion, in a three dimensional space, which shapes our perceptions, empty space seems as if it is nothing but has some effects on forces.

What Parmenides claimed was that we cannot speak about or think about something that does not exist. Similar to his claim, if the claims of quantum physicists are true, then we can say that even numbers, geometry and any abstract objects of arts have physical existences which we cannot perceive. What Parmenides called illusion may be the perceived but not conceived things. What is illusion for him may refer to something in another dimension which seems as nothing in our three dimensional perception. The reason why he insisted on trusting our conception rather than perception might be based on the lack of human perception in terms of its dimensionality. Empty space is something beyond three-dimensional human perception. The theory of this dimensionality does not save universe and nothingness to be idealizations.

As it is in the case of universe, about which science can only talk about an idealization, and that universe is not the universe we mean in metaphysics. The same goes for nothingness. Science can only talk about an empty space, but even it is nothing in 3-dimensional extensionality, it is still something in another dimension. Therefore the nothing of science is not the nothing of metaphysics. "Nothingness" is

not the hypothetical empty space of the physics. The all and nothing go beyond the limits of physical explanations. To claim that universe is a concept without an idealization is a mistake of scientific point of view which makes it a fallacy of composition and nothingness a fallacy of subtraction. Consequently, the nothing and something in the ultimate why question are not included in the content of science.

3.2. Analysis of Cosmological Argument

When it is compared to the scientific explanation, cosmological argument seems to be more layered at first hand, and it seems quite convincing. The argument from the contingent chain is a strong one to object against. Since the Ancient Greeks or even earlier, human beings have had an aim to understand the nature by causal relations. Common sense tells us that the first cause must be a different kind from the causal chain. Otherwise, the world would be without a beginning which means that there is an eternal future and an eternal past. However, the area between them would be finite. That there have been past infinite days is a logically false statement owing to our temporal intuition in Kantian sense. Some argue against this by saying causal chain is misinterpreted when it is understood as temporal. Aquinas was one of them. He claimed that there is a first cause, and this first cause cannot be related with temporality since extensionality and temporality were also created by the first cause. His logical argument would be as such that

1- There is at least one type of causation which is not an event (out of time and space).

2- Creation is that kind of causation.

3- Therefore, creation is not an event.

His definition of creation is that "To create is to produce something from no preexisting subject, hence from nothing." (Wippel, 2011:89). What he meant here is that if something is produced from something then it must be eternal which does not need a first cause. Therefore, there must not have been anything before this contingent world of something. To create something from something would be an insult to God. He is not an agent in a temporal series. He always sustains the

existence of world. Clearly, this "nothing" of Aquinas is the negation of something. He argues that before the creation, there was nothing in the sense that we know at the moment. This means that there might have been something but not the same something that we experience now. There is confusion here. Instead of this something, there might have been many other something. Why do we think that only nothing can be an alternative to this something? It seems that he had in his mind an exact answer for the ultimate why question with a presumption that if there would be something, it would have to be this something. Why? He has no answer for this but we are exactly looking for this answer in our questioning.

Leibniz has some sort of an answer that this is the best possible world. However, the further claim of him that the world is best possible one since God created it makes the argument unsound. First of all, this is a fast step. There must be a sufficient reason for this. God is all good; therefore, this world is the best possible world. This seems like a moral choice. (Wippel, 2011:132). What we are looking here is a metaphysical choice rather than a moral choice.

One opposition against cosmological argument here would be that the ultimate why question is plausible for theists if only the world is seen as a series of events. That is to say, there would not be a need for the question if the world had no beginning. However, even an infinite world needs an explanation for its existence. Even if there is no event, we need reasons. Three properties shape the cosmological argument: causality, essentiality and becoming. Cosmological argument is an argument discussing the becoming of the world; not the being of the world. It reduces and limits the question.

In *The Ultimate Origin of Things,* Leibniz (1697) claimed that he derives the physical necessity from the metaphysical necessity. The explanation of him is that this something exists because the case of the largest number of possibility would produce the actuality. But this is not an answer for the question "Why did this actual world embrace the largest number of possibilities?". This is the same as saying that the cause of this result is A since A was about to cause this result. This does not give any explanation.

In the previous section I have mentioned that the cosmological argument has a transition from logical necessity to actual necessity. The argument of Leibniz (1697:4) goes as follows:

> •The reason why anything exists can't be found in the actual series of things, as I showed above; so
> •The reason why anything exists must be sought in metaphysical necessities or in eternal truths, ·because there is nowhere else it can be found·.But
> •Existing things can't derive from anything but existing things,as I have already noted above. So
> •Eternal truths must be existing things.

In this argument, we can see how the transition from logically necessary being to physical being of Leibniz. Metaphysics guarantees this transition, for Leibniz. At this point, he is wrong since metaphysics can only guarantee that there is no cause in this contingent world but from this, we cannot infer there is a cause outside the world. Theists in their cosmological arguments take a fast step when they claim that the unique alternative to this something may be nothing, and that the only cause of the contingent world is a necessary being. Instead of claiming the existence of a necessary being, the reason tells us that there is no explanation for the contingency of this world. This is not equal to saying that if there is no explanation of contingency, then there is a necessity.

The other problematic issue is that the necessary being claimed in the argument is an intentional agent as God. Why is it not a force-like cause? The necessary being may well be a being like a force only, without any intention. Why should we think that there is an intentional causation? Causation does not need an intentional characteristic. Then why should the first cause must be an intentional agent? There is a fallacy of anthropomorphism here. The assumption of him is to think that the universe is rational; therefore, its cause is a rational being. Whether the universe is ultimately intelligible or not is unclear at the first hand; let this alone, the claim that its creator is also a rational being cannot be explicable. What Leibniz tries

to do here is to verify the Christian doctrine of creation and the identity of God with providing a logical argument. However, he clearly fails in this attempt as for these reasons.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

4.1. Conclusive Remarks

Both the cosmological argument and the physicalistic explanations have failed to answer our ultimate why question when a philosophical analysis is carried out on them. However, is the philosophical analysis itself capable of giving a plausible answer? What would be the answer of an analytic inquiry for the ultimate why question? Within an analytical approach, what will be the answer of metaphysics to the question "Why is there something rather than nothing?". Nozick remarks "Someone who proposes a non-strange answer shows he didn't understand this question."(1981: 116) It seems like we are looking for a strange answer. Or it means we did not understand the question from his point of view. So let us examine whether we understand the question right or not.

The question is why there is something rather than nothing. Why is this question formulated this way? Why is it not "Why is there anything at all?". Do they have the same meaning? Why is there "something" and "nothing" together in the question? Why does the question present only two options, "something" and "nothing"? Are they mutually exclusive? Actually some of the answers for these questions have been given in the first chapter when we defined our understanding of "nothingness."

Till now, I have only made an analysis of the concepts that occur in the content of our subject. Now we should use our results to give our own answer to the question. It is obvious that those analyses we have made bring some enlightenment. However, it would be nice if we could use our definition of 'nothingness' for the use of answering the ultimate why question. Our definition of nothingness is this: *Nothingness is a conceptual idealization which corresponds to an ontological possibility, and which cannot be deviated by any being*. This conceptually idealized nothingness is a pure ontological intuition that we have which functions as a natural

layer of ontology and it has no interaction and not a single common property with being.

This definition of 'nothingness' will play the key role for us to understand the ultimate why question better and perhaps to answer it. Because our concern is a metaphysical concern, we cannot accept any other nothingness definition in this quest. Nothingness can only be defined in metaphysics. Some disciplines struggle to define the word 'nothing' but none of them have a metaphysical concern. They all define it for their own purpose and within their own context. The lack of a metaphysical definition of 'nothingness' has been the greatest problem when the ultimate question is inquired into. Now that we have a metaphysical definition of 'nothingness,' we can become hopeful to give an answer.

According to our definition, nothingness is not a state of absence of being. Rather it is ontologically a different kind from being. Without this intuition about nothingness, or this kind of other kind (if there is or can be found any), we cannot question what the being is. Ontology would be impossible if we did not understand being as a category. But how can we determine such a specific kind as nothingness which is an alternative to being? Nozick's discussions on inegalitarian theories may help us with this issue. There is one common form of explanation that inegalitarian theories share according to him:

> [T]hey hold that one situation or a small number of states N are natural or privileged and in need of no explanation, while all other states are to be explained as deviations from N, resulting from the action of forces F that cause movement away from the natural state. For Newton, rest or uniform rectilinear motion is the natural state requiring no explanation, while all other motions are to be explained by unbalanced forces acting upon bodies. (1981: 121)

For Nozick, inegalitarian theories can be benefited from to answer "Why there is A rather than B?" questions. In the quotation above, he mentions that if we ask why A rather than B, that means we have the presumption "A must be the natural state and B is the unnatural state." By "natural," we must not understand only the physical reality, but the simplest condition for a being to exist. A similar kind of theory had

been developed by Leibniz who claimed that nothingness must be the simplest possible world. Therefore, he did not ask why there is anything at all. But he asked why there is a complex something rather than simply nothing. When this is applied to our "something rather than nothing" version, we mean to say that nothingness is a more privileged or natural state than is something. Is this statement true? This also means that nothingness does not need an explanation but something does. For egalitarian theories, just the reverse is the case. Both nothingness and something require explanation equally. For them, we do not have any determinative element to choose one over the other. Nothingness is an alternative kind to being. Why do we choose it as the simpler one? The reason for this is that we already know a lot about being. We have a large number of explanations about being. However, we do not have any information about the possible different kinds as an alternative to being. This may be similar to asking why there are explanations only about being and no explanations about other possible alternatives to being.

The only possible conceptually idealized entity instead of the contingent world around us may be nothingness due to our ontological intuition of it. The Ancient Greeks' arguments about void, the argument about Plato's Beard, Aristotle's motto "Nature abhors vacuums," the Atomists' contentions that only void and atoms exist, physicists' trials for centuries with the hope of discovering the nature of empty space,… They all possessed the same intuition but could not explain that intuition. This is not a physical but a metaphysical intuition.

I am not saying here that there is nothingness. But there is an intuition about nothingness which cannot be denied. We averagely understand it. We cannot conceptualize it fully; therefore we deny it most of the time. Nevertheless, in metaphysics, we have "idealized concepts" like the concepts of universe, space, time, absoluteness, perfect symmetry. None of these is proven to exist in reality. We cannot conceptualize them fully, either. What I am saying is that nothingness is a conceptually idealized entity like they are. It is ontologically possible and a simpler kind than being. Why is it simpler? It is because we do not know about much complexity about it due to its natural definition. However, as I have discussed above, we know much about the complexities of being.

What inegalitarian theories do here is reducing the multiple complexities to a single one. In a world with something, we can ask many questions like why there is a cosmic speed limit and it is approximately 300.000km per second, or why there is gravity. But in nothingness, both in terms of its definition by us and its lack of presenting knowledge for us, it is simple. It is simple because it is far away from us. The being is complex since we are primarily a part of it and secondarily a part of nothingness. Why is nothingness far away? It is because it is only an ontological possibility. Being is the reality of the experiential world.

To prevent any explanatory deficiency, I would like to explain the how-ness of nothingness a bit more. This nothingness as ontological intuition corresponds to an entity which can be seen in analogy to the predicate "… is an entity." "… is an entity" is the most general category of metaphysics which is predicated on being, nothingness and, if there is any, other possibilities. The subject-predicate relation that we use in the world of being cannot be applied to it. This is only for making an analogy to comprehend how nothingness is conceptually idealized.

The second point is that idealizations in science may still confuse some minds. When I say "idealized concept," I try to give an analogy with a physical concept to help us understand the metaphysical concept of idealization. In science, we can make an idealization which assumes a possible state where there is no effect of friction. This idealization of frictionless plane can be thought of as an alternative to electromagnetic field or quantum vacuum. Similarly, in metaphysics, as an alternative to being, we can assume nothingness. Trying to imagine nothingness, to think of it as a state may be helpful, although it is not correct, since even a state is a concept which belongs to the world of being.

One may still argue that metaphysics must, at least just a bit, be layered on epistemology, and for epistemology nothingness cannot be a topic of investigation. However, what epistemology accepts is that it is limited, and we can reach the area beyond that limit by metaphysics only. This lies in the very meaning of metaphysics. I would use the term 'concept' rather than 'idealized concept,' if I saw this topic as one belonging to epistemology. This statement is also valid for semantics. Our

semantic capacity is shaped by the world of being. But ontology asks about the possible alternative to the world of being already. It does not mean that there is no alternative to the world of being, if nobody can go there. Only metaphysics can use this kind of a statement. This also reminds us the phenomenology of Husserl with his statement that nature gives us something to think about. From this perspective also, nothingness is not a topic which we can talk about. Metaphysics can claim that nature presents us nothingness. One might argue against this by saying that then nothingness in our minds, which means there is no nothingness in nature. The latter proposition is true while the former is false. There is no nothingness in the nature since the nature represents the being. Nothingness may be considered as being outside the nature but not in a relational outside. The error will be caused by thinking of this statement in a subject-predicate sense, since subject-predicate relation is only applicable inside the world of being. We are talking about an alternative kind to being.

When I say "entity," I mean a category which encompasses the most universal metaphysical objects. Being is only one type of it. This is the condition of doing metaphysics. Some claim that metaphysics searches for the how-ness of being. But they exclude the outside of being since it cannot bring any explanation. I stand against this. Metaphysics cannot be limited at the point where being and concepts related to being are the most general categories and there is no more, no outside of this limit. I am talking about the limits of metaphysics. I claim that the limit must be "entity" which is defined above because of the reason mentioned above. I think it would not be so wrong if I made an analogy between this limit and Kant's epistemological limit between noumena and phenomena.

This argument reminds us the biggest metaphysical debate of the history of philosophy between Parmenides and Heraclitus. The first Parmenidean rejection is that there cannot be nothingness in a way that refers to the absence of being. And the second rejection of him is that philosophy must not talk about becoming. It must talk about being only. For Heraclitus, the opposite reflects the actuality. Both of these rejections of Parmenides reveal the intuition of nothingness as an ontological layer. This may seem contradictory since Parmenides was the biggest enemy of

nothingness. However, his objection was against the nothingness understood as the absence of being. Our nothingness is not the absence of being.

Parmenides puts a metaphysical limit to being. I claim to enhance that limit. When he was talking about "One," he might have meant that being is the most universal category. It is one, unique. There cannot be any alternative to it. Therefore, for him, it must be the limit of metaphysics. However, there was a becoming, which was illusory, in this world of being. Becoming is such a great illusion even to threaten the being itself. Being might itself be a becoming-like entity in another category. He stopped at this point and regarded the rest as illusory. To solve this problem of the Parmenidean concept of illusion, we should enhance this limit. I suggest taking one further step, at which point we can no more have any knowledge to inquire. As in the example of nothingness, there is a natural limit. It is the limit of our understanding.

The problem discussed in this chapter is about the point where we should stop asking any more questions. Thus, beyond this point we can require no more explanations. When Parmenidean ontology advices us to stop at being as the most universal category, we can still raise many questions that are plausible and require explanation. However, acceptance of nothingness as a different kind alternative to being will lessen the demand for further questions. This does not mean that we have nothingness since we need it to explain being. Rather it means that there is an alternative ontological possibility which helps us to understand the nature of being. The nature of being is contingent. This contingency gives rise to ontological possibilities.

In conclusion, in order for us to answer the ultimate why question, we can only look at metaphysical explanations. The analysis of other disciplines' arguments including the other branches of philosophy has shown us that the ultimate why question can be answered only on a metaphysical basis. A metaphysical analysis of other disciplines should be used as raw material, but none of them can be an authority on our subject-matter. Pure metaphysical foundations must be sought to answer the ultimate why question. For this, we must have illuminated the nature of

nothingness. From our definition, it can be inferred that we have discovered a pure ontological intuition about nothingness. This intuition is the ontological layer of Kantian epistemological intuitions of perception (i.e. space and time). This intuition discloses itself in the ultimate why question. The ultimate why question requires an explanation which goes beyond spacetime in seeking to find an ontological layer. This ontological layer reveals possibilities. To ask why there is something rather than nothing exactly means that there are two different realms as somethingness and nothingness. These are not the negations of each other, but two different kinds of being a realm. Trying to conceive of them as two predicates which can be united under a subject will lead us to a fallacy since subject-predicate relation is only available in the realm of predicate (somethingness). We are limited in giving an exact description of nothingness since semantics and even our logical system is shaped by the realm of being. Nothingness may pervade eternity, and somehow we can see that ontological possibility. That is to say, nothingness is around us. Thus, we can talk about it. But we are buried under the pervasion of somethingness. Somethingness is disturbing us continuously. It is always active, therefore, it is always an obstacle for us to reach nothingness fully, but we can ideally conceptualize it. Nothingness will help us understand our ontological intuitions which question the beyond or the limits of the realm of being. When someone starts talking about nothingness as a possible different realm, this shows that that person has reached the limits of understanding. That is another reason why I called nothingness a conceptual idealization. We can see the metaphysical possibility of it because of our metaphysical intuition directing us to it.

Now that we have clarified the ultimate why question sufficiently, we can give our answer. There is something rather than nothing, because something is deviant. The possibility of nothingness cannot be thought like once upon a time there was nothing but now we have something. Since, by our definition, they are two different realms which do not interfere with one another, we cannot know whether there was nothingness, or it still exists in actuality. What we are sure is that nothingness is still around us as an ontological possibility, rather than actuality, but it may even have a correspondence. Our ontological intuition to ask questions like this

one supports this claim. Therefore, the question implies why the dominant realm of something exists rather than the simpler nothing. They are two different realms and somethingness is dominant because it shows itself continuously.

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APPENDIX: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü ☐

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü ☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü ☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

YAZARIN

Soyadı :
Adı :
Bölümü :

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) :

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